**EAHR 811 Response – The Short Book Online and the**

**PowerPoint Presentation**

**SQ3R Technique**

Initially as I prepared for this first response, my primary question was what is the SQ3R technique and how do I apply this to a response assignment. Then as I began to survey and question the short book online and the PowerPoint presentation, I generated several questions for myself. My main questions were what is program evaluation, what are the underlying reasons for evaluating programs, what is involved in the CDC evaluation framework, and what are the standards for effective program evaluation. As I actively read through the short book online and the PowerPoint presentation, I began to find the answers to my questions.

**What is Program Evaluation?**

Based on my reading, I determined that evaluation can mean different things in varying situations and as a discipline there is a lot of flexibility. When determining a broad definition, two key elements must be considered. These important elements are the fact that evaluation is “systematic” meaning it is planned, disciplined, and objective and secondly, evaluation must produce “value” meaning it cannot be completed without judgments of value. Based on these key elements and the information that I read, I have determined that effective program evaluation is a systematic way to improve and account for program actions involving methods that are useful, feasible, ethical, and accurate.

**What are the Underlying Reasons for Evaluating Programs?**

Throughout the reading, I began to understand that the rationale for evaluating programs often changes over the life of the program. There are several reasons to evaluate programs, but for the purpose of the two documents there were four basic reasons presented. These four reasons were as follows:

1. To Gain Insight – programs are evaluated to judge the merit and to gain insight about the program and its operations. Evaluation enables us to assess the program development and identify information for the future. Overall, it provides information for better decision making, and allows better managements of resources and services.
2. To Improve Practice – programs are evaluated for the purpose of making improvements and changing current practices. Evaluation is essential as it provides a means to understand why a program was successful or why a program did not meet its stated objectives. It is important to note that programs must be examined objectively in order to make better decisions, implement change as required, and improve upon what has already been accomplished.
3. To Assess Effects – to see how well program objectives and goals are being met. It determines the value of the program evaluation efforts and shows the contributions towards accomplishing the program goals. This information is essential for assisting decision makers to understand the benefits and consequences of what they are doing.
4. To Build Capacity – this process is most effective for programs when changes are required with respect to increasing funding, enhancing skills, building infrastructure and strengthening accountability. This process enables programs to make self-directed changes.

**What is involved in the CDC Evaluation Framework?**

Although there are several frameworks and model for evaluation, the reading and PowerPoint focused on the CDC framework because it is well researched, commonly used, flexible, and applies to various program types. The CDC framework discussed is presented as a practical, non-prescriptive tool, designed to summarize and organize essential elements of program evaluation. The model is relatively straight forward and appears easy to learn. The framework comprises steps in evaluation practice and standards for effective evaluation. It is essential to noted that adhering to these steps and standards will allow an understanding of each program's context and will improve how evaluations are conceived and conducted. The framework inherently maximizes payoffs and minimizes costs because it is a template for designing optimal, context sensitive evaluations.

The framework is presented as a circle to represent the circular nature of evaluation. The six connected steps of the framework provide a starting point to tailor an evaluation for a particular program, at a particular point in time. The steps are all interdependent and might be encountered in a nonlinear sequence; however, an order exists for fulfilling each — earlier steps should provide the foundation for the subsequent. Thus, it is important to note that each one of these steps plays a role and is crucial in the program evaluation process. The steps are as follows:

• Engage stakeholders

• Describe the program

• Focus the evaluation design

• Gather credible evidence

• Justify conclusions

• Ensure use and share lessons learned

**What are the Standards for Effective Program Evaluation?**

Based on the information that I gathered, the essence of the model is not complete until four standards are satisfied. These standards are depicted in the centre of the model and are intended to maximize the quality and effectiveness of the evaluation process. They are the stated criteria and standard for which the quality of the program evaluation efforts can be judged. The four standards — utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy — provide quality for evaluation activities. By applying these four standards, an evaluation that is useful, feasible, proper and accurate is conducted.

**PART II – Personal Response**

Being new to the profession of education and a contract worker for SIAST, I have not been able to instruct the same course more than once. Therefore, I am unsure what capacity I will actually have in the process of program evaluation or when my opportunity will actually happen. At present, two program areas of which I am casually contracted are undergoing some form of program evaluation. One program is being evaluated for seat capacities and the possibility of increasing the number of students to assist in meeting labour market demands and workplace shortages, whereby the other course is undergoing a complete course offering evaluation for the 2010 fall semester. As a result, I am intrigued to find out what method/model of program evaluation they have selected as they undertake these processes. Based on the knowledge I gained from the readings, the course that is undergoing the capacity review does not really meet the requirements of the CDC framework. However, the program undergoing course offering restructuring could definitely benefit from the CDC framework or could already be actively engaged in its use. For this particular program, my understanding is that they intend to restructure various courses and course objectives to generate a program that better meets the needs of industry. With that said, it appears as though they have taken into account the needs of the various stakeholders which makes me wonder if they are using the CDC model. They are also hosting a focus group of past graduates from the program to gain their insight on what skills were required of them when they entered the workforce. This is another key step in the CDC framework. Once this information is tabulated it is my understanding that they intend to meet with the program instructors to determine what course objectives are most essential and what means of delivery are best suited for the new course offerings. This is another component of the of the CDC framework with respect to evaluation design and gathering credible evidence. As I receive updates on the process of the evaluation, I intend to continue to compare it to the model to determine if the CDC framework was perhaps utilized. Prior to these readings, I would never have considered nor done any comparisons to an evaluation model. These readings have definitely sparked my interest in hearing about these evaluations.

As my career advances and I become a permanent full-time employee, I hope that I can become an active participant in the program evaluation process. Upon completion of this course, I hope to have a better understanding and working knowledge of program evaluation so that I can be a value-added member to the process when my input is required.

**References**

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